

The Tragedie of Hamlet

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Hora. I my Lord, and of Calves-skins too.

Ham. They are Sheep and Calves which seeke out assurance in that, I will speake to this fellow. Whose graue's this sirra?

Clow. Mine sir, or a pit of clay for to be made.

Ham. I thinke it thine indeed for thou lye'st in't.

Clow. You lye out on't sir, and therefore tis not yours; for my part I do not lye in't, yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lye in't to be in't and say it is thine, tis for the dead, not for the quick, therefore thou lye'st.

Clow. Tis a quick lye sir, twill away againe from me to you.

Ha. VVhat man dost thou dig it for?

Clow. For no man sir.

Ham. What woman then?

Clow. For none neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't?

Clow. One that was a woman sir, but rest her soule shee's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knaue is, we must speake by the card, or equiuocatio wil vndoo vs. By the Lord *Horatio*, this three yeres I haue took note of it, the age is grown so pick'd, that the toe of the peasant comes so neere the heele of the Courtier he galls his kybe. How long hast thou been a Graue-maker?

Clow. Of the daies i'th yeere I came too't that day that our last King *Hamlet* ouercame *Fortinbrasse*.

Ham. How long is that since?

Clow. Cannot you tell that? euery foole can tell that, it was that very day that young *Hamlet* was borne: he that is mad and sent into *England*.

Ham. I marry, why was he sent into *England*?

Clow. Why because a was mad: a shall recouer his wits there, or if a doe not, tis no great matter there.

Ham. Why?

(as he,

Clow. I will not bee scene in him there, there are men as mad

Ham. How came he mad?

Clow. Very strangely they say.

Ham. How strangely?

Clow. Faith een with loosing his wits.

Ham. Vpon what ground?

Clow. Why here in *Denmark*: I haue bin Sexton here man and boy thirty yeares.

Ham.

Prince of Denmarke.

Ham. How long will a man lye i'th earth ere he rot?

Clow. Faith if a be not rotten before a dye, as we haue many pocky corpes, that will scarce hold the laying in, a will last you some eight yeere, or nine yeere. A Tanner will last you nine yeere.

Ham. VVhy he more then another?

Clow. Why sir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade, that a will keep out water a great while; and your water is a fore decayer of your whorson dead body, heer's a scull now hath lyen you i'th earth

Ham. VVhose was it? (twenty three yeares.

Clow. A whorson mad fellowes it was, whose do you think it

Ham. Nay I know not. (was?

Clow. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue, a pould a flagon of Renish on my head once, this same skull sir, was sir *Torick's* skull, the Kings Iester.

Ham. This?

Clow. Een that.

Ha. Alas poore *Toricke*, I knew him *Horatio*, a fellow of infinite iest, of most excellent fancy, he hath bore me on his back a thousand times, and now how abhorred in my imagination it is: my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I haue kist I know not how oft: where be your gibes now? your gamboles, your songs, your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roare, not one now to mock your own grinning, quite chopfalne. Now get you to my Ladies table, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this fauour she must come, make her laught at that. Prethee *Horatio* tell me one thing.

Hora. VVhat's that my Lord?

Ha. Dost thou think *Alexander* lookt a this fashion i'th earth?

Hora. Een so.

Ham. And smelt so: pah.

Hora. Een so my Lord.

Ham. To what base vses we may returne *Horatio*? Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of *Alexander*, till a find it stopping a bunghole?

Hora. Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ha. No faith, not a iot, but to follow him thether with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it. *Alexander* died, *Alexander* was buried, *Alexander* returneth to dust, the dust is earth, of earth we make lome, & why of that lome whereto he was conuerted, might

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